

## **MARK SCHEME for the October/November 2013 series**

### **9699 SOCIOLOGY**

**9699/11**

Paper 1 (Essay), maximum raw mark 50

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and candidates, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which Examiners were instructed to award marks. It does not indicate the details of the discussions that took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking began, which would have considered the acceptability of alternative answers.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the question paper and the Principal Examiner Report for Teachers.

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### Section A

**1 'Functionalist theories of socialisation fail to reflect the complex nature of social interaction.' Explain and assess this view. [25]**

- 0–6** A few general statements about socialisation might be worth two or three marks. At the top of the band, some simple links might be made between the concept of socialisation and functionalist theory, though the knowledge demonstrated will be very narrow in range.
- 7–12** A simple account of the functionalist theory of socialisation would fit the lower part of the band. A more detailed summary of the functionalist view of socialisation would trigger the higher part of the band. At this level, there may be little or no attempt at assessment.
- 13–18** Answers at this level will include a basic account of the functionalist theory of socialisation. There will also be an attempt to explain the view that functionalist theories fail to reflect the complex nature of social interaction. Higher in the band, there will be an assessment of the view on which the question is based. However, within this band the assessment may be limited in range and depth.
- 19–25** As for the previous band except that the assessment will be incisive and sustained. The interactionist perspective may be used to good effect to illustrate the limitations of the functionalist theory of socialisation, and this may be complemented by other lines of analysis perhaps focusing on the conservative and/or deterministic assumptions inherent in the functionalist perspective. Lower in the band, there may be no attempt to distinguish between different functionalist theories and the assessment may rely mainly on a juxtaposition of different theories of socialisation. Answers at the top of the band will recognise that there are different strands within functionalist theory (Durkheim, Malinowski, Parsons, Merton) and the assessment will include some direct engagement with the claim that functionalist theories fail to reflect the complex nature of social interaction. The post-modernist critique of functionalist theories of socialisation might feature in answers that reach this band.

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**2 'The degree to which there are similarities between sociology and the natural sciences has been exaggerated.' Explain and assess this view. [25]**

- 0–6** Some simple observations about the nature of scientific enquiry/method may be worth three or four marks. A limited attempt to define the positivist position in sociology would reach the top of the band.
- 7–12** Lower in the band, answers will demonstrate a simple understanding of the methods of the natural sciences and may consider the position advanced by the positivists in the debate about whether sociology can be a science. Higher in the band, answers are likely to demonstrate a more developed understanding of what scientific method involves through, for example, references to thinkers such as Popper, Kuhn, Lakatos, and Lynch. There may be little or no attempt at assessment at this level.
- 13–18** Answers that merit this band will demonstrate a sound understanding of different views about the links between sociology and the natural sciences. This may include some discussion of the positivist and anti-positivist positions. References to the Realist perspective would also make a valuable contribution to the discussion. Higher in the band, there will also be an attempt to assess the view that the similarities between sociology and the natural sciences have been exaggerated. However, the assessment may lack depth and perhaps take the form of a juxtaposition of the positivist and anti-positivist positions.
- 19–25** Answers that trigger this band will feature a good understanding of different views about the relationship between sociology and the natural sciences. There will also be a sustained and well informed assessment of the view expressed in the question. Lower in the band, the range of analytical points may be confined to the conventional positivist versus anti-positivist debate. Higher in the band, a wider range of points may feature, including possibly references to one or more of the following: the post-modernist perspective, the feminist critique of positivism, the Realist viewpoint, and debates about subjectivity and the role of values in sociology/science.

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### Section B

**3 'Data derived from the use of quantitative research methods is low in validity and therefore has little value in sociological research.' Explain and assess this view. [25]**

**0–6** A few vague comments about the nature of sociological research may be worth three or four marks. Answers that are confined to describing examples of quantitative research methods would fit the top half of the band.

**7–12** Answers at this level will demonstrate a basic understanding of the strengths and limitations of using quantitative research methods in sociological research. Lower in the band, answers may be confined to a few broadly accurate observations about why the data produced using quantitative methods lacks depth. To go higher, a wider range of strengths and limitations needs to be considered, though not necessarily with equal emphasis between the strengths and the limitations. The focus may be more on practical strengths and limitations in this band, with knowledge of theoretical issues proving somewhat lacking. Answers that describe the strengths and limitations of questionnaires or structured interviews, with addressing the topic of quantitative data in general, can gain up to 12 marks if done well. There may be little or no attempt to assess the view expressed in the question at this level.

**13–18** Within this band, the view expressed in the question will be explained fully, possibly by referring (implicitly or explicitly) to the interpretivist critique of quantitative research methods. A range of strengths and limitations of quantitative research will be discussed accurately and this will include some treatment of relevant theoretical issues, with references to validity in particular. Higher in the band, there will also be an attempt to assess the overall value of quantitative data in sociological research. However, the assessment may lack depth at this level and is likely to be confined mainly to a simple juxtaposition of strengths and limitations or juxtaposition of different theoretical perspectives (positivist versus interpretivist).

**19–25** Answers at this level will offer a full and well-informed account of why the data collected using quantitative research methods might be considered inferior to the insights provided by qualitative methods. The assessment will cover a range of strengths and limitations of each research approach (quantitative and qualitative) and will demonstrate a sound understanding of the theoretical issues involved. There will also be an attempt to reach an overall conclusion in response to the question and the extent to which this is developed may be the main discriminator between scripts within the top band. Answers that reach the top of the band are likely to question the basis on which judgments are made about what constitutes good research data. And more generally raise questions about the basis on which research methods can be ranked against each other in terms of usefulness or degree of insight produced.

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**4 'The depth of understanding achieved using unstructured interviews more than outweighs the practical limitations of this research method.' Explain and assess this view. [25]**

**0–6** A few simple comments about interviews in general might be worth 3 or 4 marks. A clear description of the different types of interview, with no further development in relation to the question, would trigger the top of the band.

**7–12** A basic description of unstructured interviews as a research method, perhaps supported by references to one or two relevant studies, would be worth a mark in the lower half of the band. A broadly accurate account of a few strengths and limitations in using the unstructured interview approach would trigger the top part of the band. Answers at this level are likely to focus on practical strengths/limitations rather than explore some of the relevant theoretical issues.

**13–18** A sound account of the strengths and limitations of unstructured interviews is required to reach this band. Lower in the band the treatment of theoretical issues may be lacking in detail and depth of understanding. Higher in the band, a full range of practical and theoretical strengths and limitations of unstructured interviews will be discussed. There will also be an attempt to assess the arguments for using unstructured interviews in sociological research, though the points made may be rather simple. One way of constructing the assessment would be to contrast unstructured interviews with structured interviews.

**19–25** A good account of the strengths and limitations of unstructured interviews will be offered at this level. Both practical and theoretical issues will be addressed. There will also be a sustained attempt to assess the usefulness of unstructured interviews in sociological research. Lower in the band, the assessment may be confined to contrasting unstructured interviews with one or more alternative research methods, such as structured interviews. To go higher in the band, however, the assessment needs to include a more direct analysis of the value of using unstructured interviews in sociological research. This might include, for example, a discussion of research aims and values, reflections on the relationship between the researcher and the respondent, and issues of what constitutes good sociological research. Reward candidates who use references to relevant studies to show the type of context in which unstructured interviews might be a particularly appropriate choice of research method. Answers at this level should respond directly to the issue of whether the depth of understanding achieved using unstructured interviews more than outweighs the practical limitations of this research method.

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### Section C

**5 ‘Differences in income and wealth benefit only the rich and powerful groups in society.’  
Explain and assess this view. [25]**

**0–6** A few simple points about the nature of social inequality might be worth three or four marks. A simple response to the view that differences in income and wealth mainly benefit the rich and powerful groups, based mainly on assertion, would trigger the top half of the band.

**7–12** A basic account describing the main patterns of inequality in income and wealth in modern industrial societies would fit the lower part of the band. Likewise, a simple summary of the possible links between wealth and power in modern industrial societies would merit up to 10 marks. Higher in the band, there will be an attempt to explain the view on which the question is based. This is likely to take the form of a basic account of the Marxist perspective on class relations and the distribution of wealth/income. At this level, there may be little or no evidence of assessment.

**13–18** A good account of the Marxist analysis of the links between power and economic inequality in modern industrial societies would fit the lower part of the band. Higher in the band, there will also be an attempt to assess the view that differences in income and wealth mainly benefit the rich and powerful groups in society. However, the assessment may lack depth at this level and rely mainly on the juxtaposition of different theories of social class; for example, contrasts between the Marxist and functionalist theories.

**19–25** Answers that merit this band will provide a clear and accurate explanation of the view that differences in income and wealth mainly benefit the rich and powerful groups in society. There will also be a sustained assessment of this view. Lower in the band, the assessment may still rely mainly on the juxtaposition of different sociological theories of class. To go higher, however, the assessment must include some direct analysis of the notion that differences in income and wealth benefit only the rich and powerful.

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**6 'There is no longer inequality between males and females in modern industrial societies.'**  
**Explain and assess this view. [25]**

- 0–6** A few simple reflections on social inequality in general may be worth two or three marks. Some simple observations about the nature of gender inequality would trigger the upper part of the band.
- 7–12** A basic account of some of the changes in society that may have led to a reduction in the inequality females face would fit the lower part of the band. A sound description of the forms and patterns of gender inequality today would also be worth up to 10 marks. Higher in the band, the answer may outline one or more sociological explanations of gender inequality, perhaps through reference to feminist theory, with no direct attempt to explain the view that gender inequality may have been reduced or eroded in recent years. There may be little or no assessment at this level.
- 13–18** A good account of two or more sociological explanations of gender inequality would merit the lower part of the band. Likewise, a sustained explanation of why it might be thought that gender inequality has been reduced or removed in recent years would also fit the lower part of the band. Higher in the band, there will also be some assessment of the view that gender inequality no longer exists. The assessment may rely mainly on the juxtaposition of contrasting perspectives on the nature of gender relations today.
- 19–25** Answers at this level will demonstrate a sound understanding of a number of sociological explanations of gender inequality and this may include well-informed references to the different strands of feminist theory. In addition, there will also be a well-constructed assessment of the view that there is no longer inequality between males and females in modern industrial societies. Higher in the band, there will be some element of sophistication in the assessment. For example, there may be an attempt to explain and assess the idea that contrasting experiences of different groups of women are somewhat neglected in explanations and theories of gender inequality. Good use of empirical evidence alongside theory might also help to distinguish answers that merit the top part of the band. Engagement with the post-modernist critique of feminist theory may be a further feature of high quality answers to this question.